To know your anſwere, whether you'l admit him.
Duke. With all my heart; ſome three or foure of you
Goe giue him courteous conduct to this place,
Meane time the Court ſhall heare *Bellarios* Letter.

Your Grace ſhall vnderſtand, that at the receite of your Letter I am very ſicke; but in the inſtant that your Meſſenger came, in louing viſitation was with me a young Doctor of Rome, his name is Balthazer: I acquainted him with the cauſe in controuerſie betweene the Iew and Anthonio the Merchant; we turned ore many Bookes together, hee is furniſhed with my opinion, which bettred with his owne learning, the greatneſſe whereof I cannot enough commend, comes with him at my importunity, to fill vp your Graces requeſt in my ſtead. I beſeech you, let his lacke of years be no impediment to let him lacke a reuerend eſtimation, for I neuer knew ſo young a body with ſo olde a head: I leaue him to your gracious acceptance, whoſe triall ſhall better publiſh his commendation.

Enter Portia for Balthazer.

Duke. You heare the learn'd *Bellario* what he writes,
And heere I take it is the Doctor come.
Giue me your hand, come you from old *Bellario*?
Por. I did my Lord.
Duke. You are welcome, take your place:
Are you acquainted with the difference
That holds this preſent queſtion in the Court.
Por. I am enformed throughly of the cauſe:
Which is the Merchant heere? and which the Iew?
Duke. *Anthonio* and olde *Shylocke*, both ſtand foorth.
Por. Is your name *Shylocke*?
Iew. *Shylocke* is my name.
Por. Of a ſtrange nature is the ſute you follow,
Yet in ſuch rule, that the Venetian law
Cannot impunge you as you do proceed.
You ſtand within his danger, doe ye not?
Ant. I, ſo he ſayes.

Por. Do you confeſſe the bond?
Ant. I do.
Por. Then muſt the *Iew* be mercifull.
Shy. On what compulſion muſt I, tell me that.
Por. The quality of mercy is not ſtrain'd,
It droppeth as the gentle raine from heauen
Vpon the place beneath: it is twice bleſt,
It bleſſeth him that giues, and him that takes,
Tis mightieſt in the mightieſt, it becomes
The throned Monarch better then his crowne.
His ſcepter ſhewes the force of temporall power,
The attribute to awe and maieſty,
Wherein doth ſit the dread and feare of Kings:
But mercy is aboue this ſceptred ſway,
It is enthroned in the hearts of Kings,
It is an attribute to God himſelfe;
And earthly power doth then ſhew lik'ſt Gods,
When mercy ſeaſons iuſtice: therefore *Iew*,
Though iuſtice be thy plea, conſider this,
That in the courſe of iuſtice, none of vs
Should ſee ſaluation: we do pray for mercy,
And that ſame prayer, doth teach vs all to render
The deeds of mercy. I haue ſpoke thus much
To mitigate the iuſtice of thy plea,
Which if thou follow, this ſtrict Court of Venice
Muſt needs giue ſentence gainſt the Merchant there,
Shy. My deeds vpon my head, I craue the law,
The penalty and forfeit of my bond.
Por. Is he not able to diſcharge the money?
Baſſ. Yes, heere I tender it for him in the Court,
Yea twice the ſumme, if that will not ſuffice,
I will be bound to pay it ten times ore,
On forfeit of my hands, my head, my heart:
If this will not ſuffize, it muſt appeare
That malice beares downe truth. And I beſeech you
Wreſt once the Law to your authority,

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE *Merchant of Venice* (STC 22297) LONDON, 1600 [1619] THE BRITISH LIBRARY (C.12.g.31) Octavo